



Gotham City 14 Miles: 14 Essays on Why the 1960s Batman TV Series Matters

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From 1966 to 1968, both on ABC and in theaters, America embraced Batman as a campy cultural icon. But in the ensuing decades, many vilified the show as an embarrassment that needed to be swept under the rug if Batman -- and super-heroes -- were to be taken seriously. Now, we can return to Adam West's Gotham... to the unapologetic fun of colorful, cackling villains hatching bizarre schemes... to phrases like "Atomic batteries to power!" and "Same bat-time, same bat-channel!..". to deadpan heroes climbing walls and defying deathtrap cliffhangers... and find these aspects rich with cultural meanings we may have ignored. GOTHAM CITY 14 MILES offers the series the critical reevaluation it deserves. The book's diverse essays examine Batmania, camp, the role of women, the show and '60s counter-culture, the show's celebrated actors, its lasting cultural effects, and other subjects. From Sequart Research & Literacy Organization. More info at <http://Sequart.org>

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From Reader Review Gotham City 14 Miles: 14 Essays on Why the 1960s Batman TV Series Matters for online ebook

Aditya Mallya says

The reruns of the classic 1960s 'Batman' series were probably my earliest introductions to pop culture. I have vivid memories of the bright red phone, the ridiculous firemen's poles leading to the Batcave, the fantastic villains, Robin's classic "Holy" catchphrase and of course, the iconic "Zap/Pow/Bam" sound effects. As a result, I enjoyed reading '14 Miles', a collection of essays on the 1966 Batman. The essays, all written by Bat-fans of some prominence, are diverse. Among other things, you'll find a deep-dive into the show's use of gadgetry, an argument for why the show saved the comic book, a look at the parade of guest stars who made cameos over the course of the three seasons, a description of how the show drew from (and further inspired) the pop art movement of the '60s, an account of the show's explosion of popularity and almost instant creative decline, and of course the inevitable feminist examination of the women on the show. If you too have fond childhood memories of "Na na na na na na na na na na na na Batman", or even if you're a Batman or comic-book fan in general, you'll want to give this one a read.

Chris Dean says

Very enjoyable. Bought this on a lark when I met Jim Beard at Motor City Comic Con, and I'm glad I did. Learned things I never knew and have a greater appreciation for the show. Well worth while.

Rich says

Essays were uneven, but some were highly informative/entertaining. Lots of repeat information. I'm glad I read it.

A.K. Adler says

Fun compilation of essays looking back on the classic 1966 Adam West/Burt Ward Batman TV show. As with most anthologies, the quality varies and some of these essays are certainly skimmable. But at its best, this book lives up to its subtitle, reminding you why the show mattered and inspiring you to seek it out and watch it again.

Jeff says

This is a great collection of essays exploring various aspects of the 1960s Batman TV series: the Batmania that swept the country, the evolution of Batman from comics to television, the music, the pop art aspects, youth culture, gadgetry, etc.

For those of us who grew up watching the series, either when it first aired or later, in syndication, this book is a wonderful mixture of nostalgia and insight into the times and the television/pop culture phenomenon that was Batman.

Those who have not seen the series, and are only familiar with the dark, grim version of Batman that is currently popular, might enjoy this peek into the 1960s and how something as wonderfully campy as this TV show could actually work.

Now if they would just get their act together and release the series on DVD.....

Addicted2books says

I loved the Adam West "Batman" TV show in 1966 when I was 9 years old. This book brought back a lot of great memories and I learned quite a bit about the show that I did not know. The idea of including 14 essays by 14 authors is kind of a gimmick (14 essays for 14 miles) that doesn't wear well. As I got through the book, there was a lot of repetition in the essays.

Melki says

Growing up in my house, you watched what my dad wanted to watch come evening TV time. Luckily, he had pretty good taste. I remember a lot of *Dragnet* and *The F.B.I.* And *Batman*. We both loved that one!

I loved it so much, I frequently slept in my Batman costume -

No, that's not me, but I was equally adorable.

Pop music show, *Shindig* had just been cancelled, and ABC needed something to fill it's spot. Producer William Dozier was handed the job of turning a comic book into a series.

"ABC had bought the concept without any idea what to do with it." Having been offered the series based on a character he was unfamiliar with, Dozier purchased comics to read en route to a meeting in New York. "At first, I thought they were crazy. I really thought they were crazy, if they were going to try to put this on TV. Then I had just the simple idea of overdoing it, of making it so square and so serious that adults would find it amusing." This would play into the camp trend that had been bubbling around the periphery of pop culture at the time.

It was the four-color comic book brought to vivid life. This effect was enhanced when Dozier had National Periodical letterer Ira Schnapp create a set of comic-book sound effects to be superimposed over the fight scenes, helping to transform the hero from printed page to TV screen.

Batman premiered on January 12th, 1966.

It was a hit.

Nothing before had been so colorful, so crazy, so in-your-face. What other show could feature *dastardly deathtraps and confounding cliffhangers*? Not to mention an awesome theme song by Neil Hefti!

Here's my favorite version - the Batman theme sung by *actual bats*:

<http://newsfeed.time.com/2013/06/25/w...>

Celebrity cameos proved to be popular and highly entertaining -

Batman window cameos - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d85gkO...>

How many can you name?

The show's quality and popularity faltered a bit after the first year, and it was gone after three seasons.

This was a great concept for a book and would easily be enjoyed by anyone with fond memories of the show. It was a bit *in-depth* for me, however, as EVERY aspect of the show is analyzed to pieces. Plus, essay after essay comparing the show to the comics can get a little tiresome.

This is really for die-hard fans only.

Lance Woods says

If you love the goofy, pop-art "Batman" TV series of the '60s -- and if you were ever mocked by your peers for doing so, as I was -- you should sample this collection of serious and entertaining essays about the show and its impact on our culture. The wide range of authors and viewpoints illuminated new aspects of the series that I never considered -- positive and negative -- and revisited several that I always held dear. As with any anthology, readers will probably find some authors' viewpoints more valid than others. But that diversity is one reason I heartily recommend this to anyone who's enjoyed the show for all these decades, and especially those who have been enjoying the current Bat-Renaissance as much as I have. (I've ordered the Batman '66 action figures; now, if they'd just offer the Blu-ray box set ..)

Dan Taylor says

Fun collection of essays on the history and pop-culture impact of the 1960s Batman tv show (and movie). Whether you love the show (as I do) or hate it the arguments inside these pages probably won't sway you one way or the other, but it's a nice tribute to a pop culture milestone that sadly remains unavailable on home video.

Julian Darius says

This is an excellent book for people who wish to understand the Batman TV series better. It's a series that's much maligned, but it's also one that catapulted Batman to pop stardom decades before Burton's 1989 film. So we all know the TV show is important, but we sometimes have trouble understanding its place in history,

not only in terms of American television and pop culture but also in terms of storytelling and the history of Batman. This book does that in spades. If you've ever even been curious about the show or about Batman's history, you owe it to yourself to check it out.

Christopher Hill says

As a fan of most things Batman, I enjoyed reading about the cultural impact the 1966 TV show had. Some of the essays were a bit long/dry and so many brought up the same points and references, so it felt very redundant at times. That said, I'm glad to have read it and have started re-watching episodes on YouTube.

Timothy Ortez says

Bat-Fanatics will find a lot to like in this collection of essays. This book (for the most part) looks back fondly on the show, its place in history and its effect on all that came afterward. However, casual viewers of the show or 60s pop culture aficionados will find this book far too repetitive (which might be expected when this many writers contribute).

Bruce says

Interesting essays.

Zach Koenig says

As a young child, I was completely and utterly entranced by the TV adventures of Batman & Robin. Though made in the "camp" form in the middle of the pop-art movement of the 1960s, as a kid I knew nothing about that kind of stuff. I took everything completely and have probably seen every episode 20+ (and even that is a very conservative estimate) times. Yet, for a show that reached the heights of popularity ("Batmania") that Batman climbed to, there are relatively few tangible artifacts of its existence. The show has never been released for home video (although supposedly that will happen in late 2014), and only Adam West's "Back To The Batcave" and the compendium "The Official Batman Bat-Book" stick out as series tomes. Thus, I was elated to find another book about the subject!

"Gotham City 14 Miles" is an absolute joy to read based on that nostalgic perspective. It is basically just a collection of independent essays (ranging from the look of the show, the music, the villains, the creation, its place in pop culture, etc.) about the show and how it had the trajectory of a bottle rocket: quick up, quick down. All the essays are very well-written and, despite covering some "same ground", I didn't find one to be "bad" or anything like that.

This is also a book that can be used for dual purposes:

On one hand, it can almost be looked at as a "research volume" for the way it examines "Batman" within the context of its times. Granted, none of the authors go "too deep" and bring out the psychology mumbo-jumbo

that can turn similar-themed books into textbooks, but there is a lot of cultural heritage within these pages.

The biggest draw of the book, though, is that it is very clear that all these authors had a soft spot in their heart for the show, and any reader who picks this book up off the shelf will feel it as well. There is just something fascinating about such a simple concept (superhero TV show) turning into a worldwide sensation...and then falling off the map just as quickly as it lit up the world!

Of course, it didn't REALLY fall off the map, and that is why books like this can be written and sold in large quantities. I was watching "Batman" episodes in the early 1990s (some roughly 30 years after the show had left the airwaves) and I thought it was being made especially for me. The show connects with children (especially young boys) like almost no other before or since, and that kind of nostalgia is the reason why "Gotham City 14 Miles" is a fun read.

Kerry Nietz says

Ah, the 60s-era Batman TV series starring Adam West and Burt Ward—campy, colorful, and a far cry from the Bat-men of the present day. What more could be said about it?

Quite a bit, actually, and Gotham City 14 Miles proves it!

Within the pages of this book are fourteen essays exploring all aspects of the show, from the many stars that visited Gotham, to the show's relation to and effect on the comic hero, the role of women, the villains the show produced, the predictive technology, how Batman both reflected and changed the culture, a recap of the 1966 movie, and the circumstances surrounding both the show's genesis and its demise.

I first saw the TV version of Batman years after its initial run, while I was still in grade school. I remember the excitement of the cliffhanger endings, and discussing episodes with classmates. We never saw the campiness back then. Just a full color hero that we could watch after school and share.

Since then I hadn't given the show much thought. In my mind it had been completely overshadowed by the blockbuster movies and epic comics (e.g. The Dark Knight Returns) that followed. This book was a delight, though. It reawakened some of the feelings I had as a kid. Gave me a newfound respect for the boldness and uniqueness of the show. I recommend Gotham City 14 Miles to anyone who is even remotely interested in the caped crusader. Lots of interesting stuff in here.

But most importantly: How is it that the TV show STILL has never been released to video?
